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Testimony in Support of SB 186 **Education Committee** **February 26, 2018**

Chairmen Boucher, Slossberg and Fleischmann, Ranking Member Lavielle and Members of the Education Committee, I would like to thank the Committee for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of **Senate Bill 186: An Act Concerning School Counselors**.

In an effort to provide our students with a readiness in the real world, we use our resources to procure the best professionals possible to educate, counsel, protect and develop them. As our world changes, so do the needs of the students and training and skills of the people we trust to mentor them. Connecticut has developed a comprehensive program for school counselors to address students' academic and career goals, emotional and social supports, and provide interventional education to help them succeed.

The role of school counselor, at one point needing no specialized training, now requires a Master's degree and uses data-driven methods and evidence-based models. It has grown from what was once known as guidance counselor, initially developed for teachers, to provide vocational assistance, to identify the need for mental health and educational support interventions.

Given the multitude of responsibilities and skills required by our educational professionals, I respectfully ask the Committee to support this legislation and recognize the comprehensive work done by our school counselors. Thank you for your consideration.